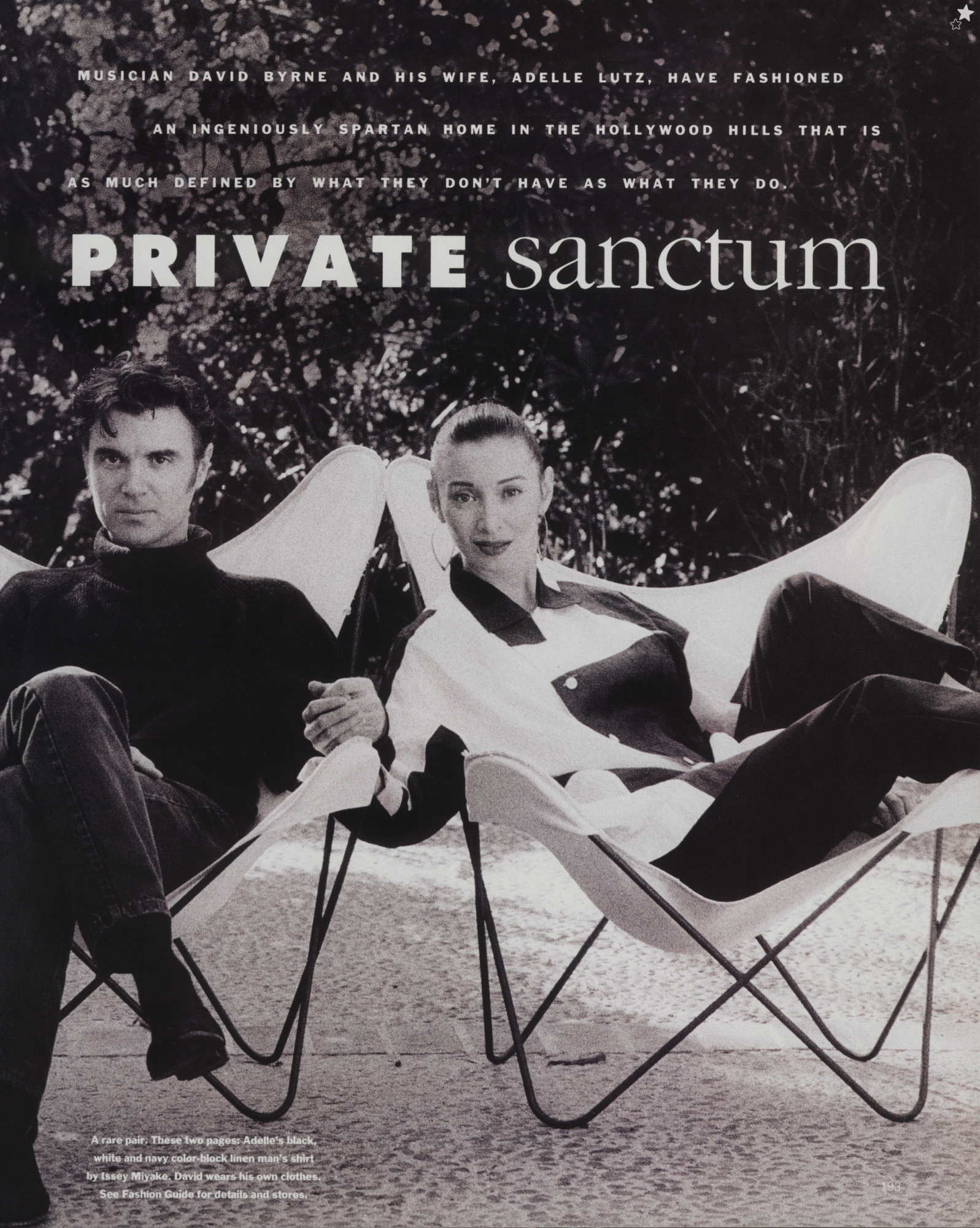
MUSICIAN DAVID BYRNE AND HIS WIFE, ADELLE LUTZ, HAVE FASHIONED AN INGENIOUSLY SPARTAN HOME IN THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS THAT IS AS MUCH DEFINED BY WHAT THEY DON'T HAVE AS WHAT THEY DO.

PRIVATE sanctum



A rare pair. These two pages: Adelle's black, white and navy color-block linen man's shirt by Issey Miyake. David wears his own clothes. See Fashion Guide for details and stores.

THESE FOUR PAGES: HAIR, MAKEUP AND GROOMING, PAUL STARR. BOB FRAYE

BOB FRAME

PRIVATE SANCTUM

by Lance Loud

David Byrne's Oscar is in the bag. Instead of being triumphantly displayed in a place of honor, the award Byrne received for his score to The Last Emperor remains cloaked in its blue velvet covering, relegated to a dusty shelf in a makeshift studio in the musician's Hollywood Hills home. Flanked by a large pair of white candles in the shapes of male and female nudes, the swathed statuette looks less like a symbol of Success, American style, and more like a voodoo doll to ward off Tinsel Town glamour.

Noting a visitor's double take after coming upon this shrouded idol, Byrne's quietly spectacular wife, Adelle Lutz, begins to laugh. This woman, with opalescent skin and delicate features, has created a welcoming ambience for her standoffish husband and their 21-month-old daughter, Malu (as in "Skip to . . . "). The couple's close circle of friends agrees: Adelle has done much to humanize her aloof Talking Head–man. "She's so full of grace and openness," remarks Hollywood screenwriter Laurie Frank, "it gives people time to get used to David." Adelle's jewelry designer sister, Tina Chow, puts it more succinctly: "Now," she says, "he talks."

The first daughter of a Japanese ikebana expert (the Oriental art of flower arranging) and a Lutheran minister, Lutz has a soothing presence that quickly puts others at ease. Like sister Tina—the former grande dame of New York's jet set headquarters, Mr. Chow's—Adelle is known for effortless poise, keen wit and all-encompassing warmth. Known as "Bonny" to friends and relatives, she has momentarily put her own career as a costume designer (True Stories, Stop Making Sense), artistic collaborator (with Robert Wilson on The Knee Plays) and actress (next in Wim Wenders' Until the End of the World) on a back burner. Instead, Adelle channels her ambition toward her home. This (CONTINUED ON PAGE 211)

Beautiful house, beautiful wife. Opposite page: Adelle wears a purple linen shirt, black wool-and-cotton-blend vest and slim black striped pants, all by Callaghan. Right: David's black cotton shirt by Dolce & Gabbana, and multicolor striped vest by Issey Miyake. Malu wears her own clothes. See Fashion Guide for details and stores.

Private Sanctum

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includes cooking macrobiotic meals, overseeing Malu's play group and taking care of all household problems, like the leak in the roof over the small bedroom that all three share. Contrary to the law of conspicuous wealth which has jurisdiction over much of southern California, the Byrnes' style is as much defined by what they don't have as what they do. Here, such basic necessities of the rich and famous as swimming pools, obviously expensive art and froufrou furnishings are way out of place. Instead, ascetic modesty is the best decorating policy. Designed in 1937 by architect Gregory Ain, the Byrnes' two-bedroom/two-bath dwelling has become a Zen homestead reflecting Adelle's Japanese upbringing as well as the couple's intolerance of high-glitz.

Hidden from the world by a natural wall of trees, the wrap-around concrete terrace in the back of their single-story house is barren save for three unexceptional butterfly chairs, a tinkling wind chime and an outcropping of bamboo that shoots up through the exposed beams of the roof. Inside, the white walls are blank, adorned by neither art nor memorabilia, and a bank of floor-to-ceiling windows lines the rear wall. The '60s Dansk couch is a hand-me-down from Tina, the "home entertainment center" consists of a small portable cassette recorder jerryrigged to the TV speakers, and the dining room table is fashioned from an unfinished door set atop two black lacquered sawhorses.

Signs of Malu—who greatly resembles David as a child—are everywhere. In the small, cluttered kitchen, colorful scribbles run along the cabinets, the indelible remnants of Malu's fling with "washable" marking pens. Around the main living area, the couple's few pieces of collectible furniture—two Noguchi floor lamps and a glass table, an Eames black leather lounge and a handmade walnut chair commissioned from the late craftsman, George Nakashima—stand amid discarded rag dolls and stuffed animals. And on the exposed brick fireplace, the couple's most highly prized possessions—two Korean ceramic vases, one dating back 1,000 years, a wedding present from Adelle's parents—sit on a ledge, conspicuously out of reach of Malu's redecorating urges.

A well-traveled child, Malu has accompanied her parents to Europe three times and Japan twice. For now, as David concentrates on his next recording, the L.A. residence is far more suitable than their New York loft. "There are no distractions here," Adelle says. "For Malu, it's better to wake up to lemon trees and tweeting birds instead of people screaming." And her next plans for the home? "My dream," she smiles, "is to have a carpet the color of brown rice and couscous." □